Consecutive Interpreting Note Taking

Tips, Techniques and Symbols

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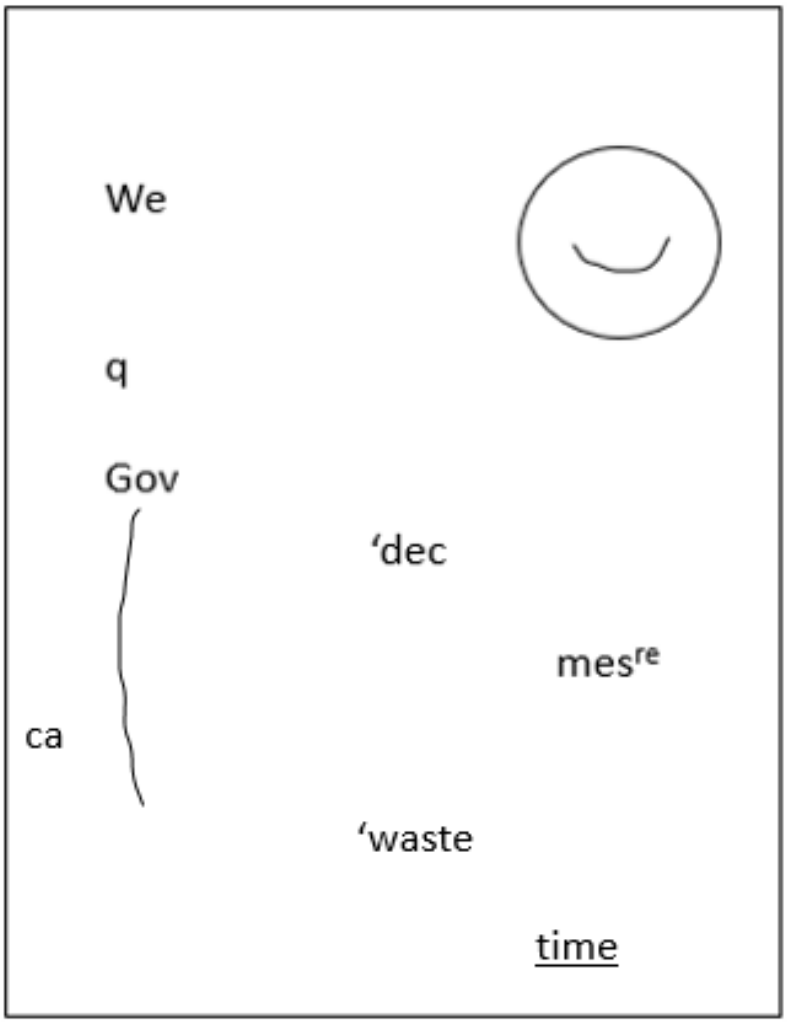
Consecutive interpreting with notes can faithfully reproduce a speech twenty-minutes long or longer in all of its details, emotions, tone, register, facts, numbers, etc. The technique requires a lot of practice. It's a bit like playing the piano. After a few weeks, you might produce a decent tune, after a year or two, you can impress clients with a spectacular interpretation. I am going to give you a few techniques here that will put you on the right path to begin your journey.

Let's transcribe the following sentence into interpreter's notes:

"We are happy that the government has decided to take this measure because it has already wasted a lot of time."

Here how is would appear on the interpreter's notebook:



Let's take a look at each element.

"We": the subject of any sentence appears in a virtual column in the left third of the sheet.

A smiley face for happy. Only two strokes of the pen is quick.

“q” is my way of saying “that,” “which,” “who,” a relative pronoun as a new subject with a new verb

“Gov” being only three letters is a clear, short abbreviation of “government.”

“dec” in the middle column, which is for verbs, clearly indicates a verb. The ‘ before it indicates the past tense. (Future would be dec’)

“mes$^{re”}$ uses an abbreviation (initials) creating technique of the first three letters, followed by the last two in superscript.

“ca” means because and is in the margin, where all links go.

The recall line indicates that the new subject (in the subject virtual column, of course) is the same as the one above that it points to.

“waste” is five letters, the top limit in terms of length

“time” is four letters, within that limit.

“<u>time</u>” the <u>underlining</u> emphasizes the word and acts like any adjective of emphasis, such as “very”.

You can create abreviations that are five letters long and quite clear by using the method above.

SYMBOLS

Symbols are graphic items that you create that have a meaning for you. You must learn them well and keep their meaning constant. It is best not to simply copy those that are used by others, unless after trying them out you find that they do jog your mind in the right direction. Here are some common symbols:

Emphasis / important	underline
Not	~~cross-out~~
Country	□
Happy / Sad	○
Person	º A (tiny "o" in superscript=head, ex: USAº = American
Arrow	↗ Go up, rise, increase
	↘ Go down, fall, decrease
	→ Produce, cause, lead to

Your system of symbols should be organic, meaning it should use a logic that allows you to derive other symbols based on a root symbol. For example, if the letter "i" with smoke rising above it (indicating the smoke stack of a factory)

means "industry" like this

then the same simbol with "-ize" can mean "industrialize," (while also being placed in the middle column for verbs):

-ize

You can also create symbols by modifying letters:

For me a small “g” with an arrow is “growth”

(an upwards arrow in the subject or object column could also signify this.)

You can add arrows to any letter that makes sense to you. So for example an “f” with the cross being an arrow for me is “future”:

“T” for me is “trade.” I can note export like this: (products leaving country)

Import can be: (products entering country)

Add a pole to a capital letter. For me P with two poles is principle:

Principle:

And a B modified in this way to me is budget:

Budget:

Go ahead and practice with a good partner who can give a good critique. It will hone your skills so that you can reproduce any speech faithfully. You must make it “your speech,” using the emotion and skills of an actor, without exaggeration.

To learn more tips, go to my website page https://www.davidviolet.com/learn-to-be-an-interpreter.

Check out my YouTube channel “The Happy Interpreter”: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiIfnxZjtuywtMVhsWRCifQ?view_as=subscriber

I want you to acquire this amazing skill and start doing the kind of long pieces of interpreting that really impresses an audience.